

## Democratic Leader Pelosi, Rep. Nadler and Ranking Members Demand Congressional Investigation on EPA's Failed Response to 9/11

Tuesday, 16 September 2003

Washington, DC -- Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), and Committee Ranking Members John Dingell (D-MI), John Conyers (D-MI), George Miller (D-CA), and Henry Waxman (D-CA) today called on Speaker Hastert to launch a Congressional investigation into the EPA's failed response and clean-up of World Trade Center contaminants following the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

The demand for a Congressional investigation follows a report issued last month by the EPA's Inspector General that documented serious problems in the way the EPA and the White House responded to the health crisis created by the terrorist attack. The report cited that the EPA did not have sufficient data to make assurances about the safety of the air around Ground Zero and that the White House instructed EPA officials to downplay air quality concerns because of "competing considerations."

Recent studies show that 78 percent of emergency responders, who traveled from all over the country to work at Ground Zero, reported at least one World Trade Center-related lung symptom as a result of their work at the site. Doctors have also documented thousands of cases of New York City residents and workers who have become sick after they returned to their homes, offices and schools around Ground Zero.

Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi stated, "The Environmental Protection Agency knew there were air pollution risks and failed to act. Just as the September 11 attack was a national tragedy, the recovery is a national responsibility. The Bush Administration must uphold its responsibilities to the people who live and work around the World Trade Center site."

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, the Congressman representing Ground Zero, stated, "The White House and the EPA have covered up the reasons for their failed response to September 11 long enough. New York City residents and workers continue to breathe in World Trade Center contaminants because of the EPA's false reassurances about air quality and their failure to decontaminate dust from apartments, office buildings, and schools. The Congress must launch an investigation now to ensure that the evasiveness demonstrated by the White House and EPA in their response to 9/11 never happens again, and finally, to correct the wrongs of the past. The victims of the terrorist attacks, and those emergency responders who worked at Ground Zero deserve answers. They deserve a cleanup, not a cover up."

Rep. John Dingell, Ranking Democrat on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, stated, "The White House was wrong when it told EPA to 'add reassuring statements and delete cautionary ones' in their report on the air quality in Lower Manhattan. This put the heroes and victims of September 11th at further, and needless risk. We need to investigate what EPA knew, and what it didn't know. And we need an objective look at how the White House influenced EPA's report. We can then see what needs to be done to ensure that the American public is not misled again."

Rep. John Conyers, Ranking Democrat of the House Judiciary Committee, stated, "From providing the American public with faulty assurances to downplaying significant environmental and health risks, the EPA's IG report clearly documents a pattern and practice of corruption and cover-ups that has placed the lives of countless emergency responders, rescue volunteers and New York city residents in harms way. What's most disturbing is a majority of the actions undertaken by the Administration were carried out all in the name of political gamesmanship."

Rep. George Miller, Senior Democrat of the House Education and Workforce Committee, stated, "The men and women who put their lives on the line day and night for weeks in the Ground Zero pit and at the Pentagon have a right to know who at the White House Council on Environmental Quality whitewashed the EPA reports on the hazards at the rescue

sites, as documented by the EPA inspector general; a right to know their health and safety was paramount in the minds of those federal officials charged with protecting them; and a right to compensation for the equipment they brought to protect their health, especially in light of the serious underestimations of risk by the EPA and OSHA."

Rep. Waxman, Ranking Democrat on the House Government Reform Committee, stated, "While political meddling in EPA's work is a hallmark of this Administration, it is outrageous that the White House would gag EPA from keeping the public adequately informed after a terrorist attack on our country."

In a letter to Speaker Hastert, the Members stated their concern about the EPA's actions in New York City following the collapse of the World Trade Center. The letter requests that Congressional hearings be convened immediately in relevant House committees, including the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Education and the Workforce, Government Reform, and the Judiciary, to know what further action must be taken to safeguard the health and lives of those affected by the EPA's response to the terrorist attacks.

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